

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Prescott School

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Third and Main

N/A not for publication

city, town Prescott

N/A vicinity of

state Kansas

code 20

county Linn

code 107

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: public library

4. Owner of Property

name City of Prescott

street & number City Hall

city, town Prescott

N/A vicinity of

state Kansas 66767

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Linn County Courthouse

city, town Mound City

state Kansas 66056

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kansas Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate June, 1970 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records Historic Preservation Department, Ks. State Historical Society
Topeka

city, town

state

Kansas 66612

7. Description.

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The old Prescott School, built in 1883, stands near the edge of Prescott, a town with a population of about 300. It is a two-story brick structure with a limestone foundation, measuring approximately 55 feet by 30 feet. The exterior walls are fourteen inches thick. It has undergone relatively little change in its 99 years of existence. Nearby are small houses, a church, and the 1924 high school which now serves as the elementary school. The old school stands in its original location, but some of the school property on the west has been sold for a new firehouse.

The front (east) and back facades are five bays long. Both have centrally located doors. The original second story fire-escape door occupied the central bay on the west facade. That was changed, however, when the first of two rural school houses was moved in and attached to the back of the building. The new fire-escape doors were cut out of the windows furthest east on the south side and furthest west on the north side. The addition to the west facade has been removed. It is now serving as part of the church that is located across the street from the school. The outline of the addition can still be seen on the school building. Also visible on the exterior are the end-plates of iron rods that were installed in 1909 when there was some concern over the stability of the building. These were installed between the ceiling of the first floor and the floor of the second, and under the floor of the first story.

The windows are all four over four, double-hung sash windows. They have segmental arches while the doors and the small window in the gable have semi-circular arches. All of the doors and windows are finished with corbelled brick architrave trim. Both the front and the back entrances have double doors.

The ubiquitous bell cupola sits astride the gable roof. It is sheathed with vertical boards and is decorated with brackets at each corner. It has louver windows. The cupola still holds the original bell which is inscribed, "Henry McShane and Co., Baltimore, Md. 1883." The wheel on the iron bell is wooden.

The overhanging eaves of the roofline are supported on scrolled brackets. Beneath the box cornice is a wooden frieze. The hipped roof is finished with green asbestos shingles. Two chimneys stand on the ridge-line behind the cupola.

The plan of the school is very simple. It has two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs, all of which run front to back. Each room is 23 feet by 28 feet. A broad stair separates the two sides of the building. The south room downstairs is currently being used as the town's public library. The north room is used for an annual quilt show and as storage space by the library. The upstairs rooms are not used on a regular basis. A cloak room on the second floor corresponds in location to the entrance hall downstairs.

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It measures 10½ by 5½ feet and contains the ladder that provides access to the belfry.

The rooms have doors into the halls at their east and west ends. All of the doors have transoms above them. Wainscoting and chalkboards line the walls of all the rooms. Part of the original blackboard has been uncovered in the quilt room. It consists simply of smooth plaster painted black. Originally the blackboards in all rooms were the same height from the floor, with platforms in the two downstairs rooms eight and six inches high built under the blackboards so that the primary and intermediate students could reach them. When the new chalkboards were added around 1930, they were placed low enough so that the platforms were not needed and were consequently removed.

Three of the rooms have pressed metal ceilings. The south room on the second floor has a plaster ceiling.

ALTERATIONS

The old Prescott School looks today very much like it did when it was first built. The changes it experienced are to be expected in a structure that has remained vital for so long. In 1924 the building was wired for electricity. An entry hall was added to the front door in 1949 but was removed in 1980. In 1953 and 1958 rural schoolhouses were moved in and attached to the building. These were removed in 1974. The original coal burning stoves were used until 1956 when a gas heating system was installed. It is still in use.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1882-1883

Builder/Architect

Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The old Prescott School in Prescott, Kansas, was built in 1882-1883 and served continuously as a schoolhouse for 90 years. In its 99th year now, it still serves as an important structure in the community since it houses the library. It has survived largely intact and is a good example of the town schoolhouse. Much less romanticized in recent times than the old one-room schoolhouses, these town schools were monuments to the determination of the townspeople to provide proper educational facilities for their children.

Prescott was laid out in March, 1870, and the first school was taught by Miss Jane McCormick just three years later in a private residence. In 1876 a frame schoolhouse was built, but it was apparently considered inadequate by 1882 when construction of the new school building was begun. The Pleasanton Observer of November 25, 1882, took note of the building of the new brick school house saying that "it will be the finest building in this part of Linn (Co.)." About a month later, that same journal noted that "plastering on the walls of the new schoolhouse is finished."

In 1883, when the new Prescott school was opened, Linn County had 100 school districts and 99 schoolhouses. Only two of these were brick, one of them being at Prescott. The vast majority of schoolhouses were frame, there being 90 of these at the time. Of the other seven schoolhouses, three were log and four were stone.

The Prescott School served ten grades until the new high school was built to the west of it in 1924. In 1972 consolidation took the high school students to Mound City and the elementary pupils moved into the old high school. The old building was unused until 1974 when the library was established and installed in the south ground floor room.

The town schoolhouse was not so very different from the rural schoolhouse. Classes were taught in the same manner, with one teacher in a room that held several grades. Prescott school employed many of the motifs one associates with schoolhouses of this period. The cupola was an unmistakable component of any school building. The rectangular form and symmetrical floor plan was also characteristic of this building type.

The decorative motifs used at the Prescott School had become part of the standard vocabulary of public and private buildings by the 1880's. The overhanging eaves and supporting brackets, the segmental arches, and the prominent cupola were derived from the Italianate style. The cross-gable

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brings to mind domestic sources and the Downing tradition.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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Andreas, A. T. History of the State of Kansas. Chicago: 1883 p.1114.

Annual Reports of School District 92

Pleasanton Observer November 25, 1882, p3; Dec. 30, 1882, p3; Nov. 4, 1893,
p2; Dec. 9, 1893, p2.

Pleasanton Enterprise. July 27, 1906, p4.

Various school records.

Original form prepared by Mrs. Anna Mary Crawford, President,
Linn County Historical Society.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1/4 acre

Quadrangle name Prescott

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 9-13 of Block 1 on the plat of Prescott

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nora Pat Small, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Dept.

organization Kansas State Historical Society date 3-30-82

street & number 120 West Tenth telephone 913 296-3251

city or town Topeka state Kansas 66612

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer date March 29, 1982

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

Prescott School
Prescott, Kansas
Linn County
UTM Reference: 15/351000/4214210

S H E R I D A

